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# Stewart Alsop Comes Across on the Mayflower Flap

By Stewart Mayflower

Stewart Mayflower is the pen name of Stewart Alsop, the distinguished Washington columnist and brother of Joseph Alsop, the distinguished Washington columnist.

Mr. Mayflower here reviews the play by Art Buchwald, distinguished Washington columnist.

"Sheep on the Runway" seems likely to have a good run in New York, for two reasons. First, it is by Art Buchwald, who is a very witty man. Second, it is a fashionable farce, based on the fashionable notion that communism is a figment of the CIA's imagination, and that whatever goes wrong in the world is the fault of ineane American diplomats and cretinous American generals. This notion is particularly fashionable in New York, and the play will thus give fashionable New Yorkers an opportunity to enjoy their laughs while feeling virtuously superior to those fascist-minded bunglers in Washington.

As comedy, the play is about on a level with the television serial "McHale's Navy" (which is sometimes pretty funny). As political satire, it has about as much relationship to the political reality as McHale's navy has to the Navy. But the laughs are there all right, and some of them are very good laughs—Buchwald being Buchwald, that is no surprise.

The surprise, to this reviewer (no doubt prejudiced by reason of consanguinity), was the character of the protagonist, Joseph Mayflower. Mayflower is a bloody-minded columnist who succeeds, with the help of an insane diplomat and a cretinous general, in starting a war in the Oriental paradise of Nonamara. Joe Mayflower

has appeared previously, in the Buchwald column, as Joe Wallstop. Joe Wallstop was genuinely funny, and the real Wallstop winced a bit, but laughed with the rest of Washington.

Joe Mayflower is not funny. As the New York Times reviewer noted, he is "poisonously stupid and arrogant."

No one who knows him would deny that the real reasons. First, it is by Art Mayflower occasionally dis- plays what Winston Churchill called "a little honest arrogance." But stupid?

Buchwald's Mayflower is not only stupid. He is a hissing villain, a buffoon that wholly lacks the qualities that have made a vast collection of friends—including both John and Robert Kennedy—for the real Mayflower. He also lacks the qualities—notably the courage to be unfashionable—that have made Joe Mayflower a great reporter. It is not surprising that Joe Mayflower should emerge, in Buchwald's fashionable farce, as a caricature. It is surprising—for Art Buchwald has always seemed an amiable fellow—that the caricature should be so bitchy.

P-Buchwald, Art  
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